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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General presents recommendations to Security Council for establishment of 30,000-member United Nations Operation in Somalia to take over from Unified Task Force on 1 May 1993.

+ Secretary-General appoints Admiral Jonathan T. Howe of United States as his new Special Representative for Somalia for an initial period of three months, effective 9 March 1993.

+ First Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia tells press conference at Headquarters that preliminary agreement has been reached in Rome that could open way for cessation of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

+ Commission of Experts on war crimes sends reconnaissance mission to former Yugoslavia to further investigate mass killings and destruction of property in Vukovar area, in Croatia; peace talks on former Yugoslavia continue today in New York; additional meetings scheduled for tomorrow.

+ Commission on Human Rights, currently meeting in Geneva, decides to appoint Special Rapporteur on racism and xenophobia; also hears statements on human rights situation in Myanmar, Afghanistan, among other countries.

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Emphasizing that the political will to achieve security, reconciliation and peace "must spring from the Somalis themselves", Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has presented his recommendations to the Security Council for the second part of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) to take over from the United States-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) on 1 May 1993.

In his report to the Council, dated 3 March, the Secretary-General says UNOSOM II would require 20,000 military personnel of all ranks, 8,000 logistical support staff, as well as a considerably strengthened civilian staff of some 2,800 people. The mandate of UNOSOM II would confer authority for appropriate action, including enforcement action as necessary, to establish throughout Somalia, a secure environment for humanitarian

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assistance. To that end, the Secretary-General writes, UNOSOM II would seek to complete, through disarmament and reconciliation, the task begun by UNITAF for the restoration of peace and stability. The mandate would also empower UNOSOM II to provide assistance to the Somali people in rebuilding their shattered economy and social and political life.

The Security Council authorized on 3 December Member States to use "all necessary means" to ensure delivery of humanitarian aid in Somalia. Shortly thereafter UNITAF was set up, under the command of the United States military and in cooperation with the United Nations, to disarm the warring factions in its area of operation. The Secretary-General notes in his report that although the Task Force has made an important contribution in that regard, events in Kismayo and Mogadishu during the week of 21 February 1993 have demonstrated the volatility and the uniqueness of the situation in Somalia. There is still no effective functioning Government in the country. There is still no organized civilian police force, and there is still no disciplined national armed force, notes the Secretary-General.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali stresses that the deployment of UNOSOM II would be at his discretion and will not be subject to the agreement of any local faction leaders. It would cover the whole country, including its borders, both for the purpose of controlling the movement of refugees and to prevent arms from flowing into Somalia.

Noting that UNOSOM II would be the first operation of its kind to be authorized by the international community - reflecting its determination "not to remain a silent spectator" to the sufferings of the Somali people - Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali recommends that its cost be considered as an expense of the Organization to be borne by Member States. Furthermore, he says, the United Nations Fund for operation in Somalia, established by the Security Council last year, would be maintained.
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In a related development, Secretary-General announced today that he had decided to appoint Admiral Jonathan T. Howe of the United States as his new Special Representative for Somalia for an initial period of three months, effective 9 March 1993.

According to a statement issued by a United Nations spokesman today, Admiral Howe will oversee the transition from the Unified Task Force to UNOSOM II, in addition to continuing the important tasks of "promoting political reconciliation, coordinating humanitarian assistance and paving the way for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country".

Admiral Howe, retired from the United States Navy, served as Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from December 1991 to January 1993. He is currently a distinguished visiting professor at the National War College in Washington D.C.

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The First Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia, Jirair Libaridian, told correspondents today at Headquarters that a preliminary agreement had been reached in Rome that could open the way for the cessation of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Addressing a press conference, he said the agreement would provide for a group of international observers to monitor the ceasefire in the region and to facilitate the restoration of communications and the removal of obstacles to normal transportation. The monitors would also enable humanitarian assistance to be delivered and create secure conditions to facilitate the return of displaced persons to their homes.

Mr. Libaridian noted this was the first time that all sides involved in the conflict had agreed to a set of principles that could lead to an eventual ceasefire. The Armenian Government welcomed Azerbaijan's new constructive approach and hoped that its commitment to a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the conflict would be a permanent one, he added.

The Deputy Foreign Minister also urged the Security Council to express its strong support for the adoption of this agreement and "to encourage all sides involved to take additional steps to bring about a negotiated settlement to the conflict".

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The Commission of Experts on war crimes has decided to send a reconnaissance mission to the territory of the former Yugoslavia to conduct investigations into mass killings and destruction of property in the Vukovar area, in Croatia. At its fourth session, held in Geneva from 1 to 3 March, the Commission also authorized the reconnaissance team to visit other sites if necessary.

The five-member Commission was set up by the Security Council last year to investigate reports of grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and other violations of international humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia.

During its meeting this week, the Commission also discussed the Council's decision last month to ask the Secretary-General to set up an international tribunal for "the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991". In a previous report to the Secretary-General, the Commission had observed that the establishment of such a tribunal would be "consistent with the direction of its work".

Heading the reconnaissance team would be the Commission's Rapporteur on On-Site Investigations, William J. Fenrick of Canada. The other members are two Canadian officials and two representatives of Physicians for Human Rights

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-- the non-governmental organization entrusted with the investigation of the Ovcara mass grave, near Vukovar.

The Commission will hold its next session in Geneva on 22 and 23 April.

In a related development, the peace talks conducted by the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, continued today in New York, when they met with representatives of the Bosnian Government, and with leaders of the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat communities.

Additional meetings are scheduled for tomorrow.

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The Commission on Human Rights has decided to appoint for a three-year period a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance. The Commission, which is currently holding its forty-ninth session in Geneva, took that action on Wednesday by adopting a resolution in which it expressed concern that in many parts of the world, despite all efforts, racism, xenophobia and acts of violence resulting from them persisted.

The text emphasized the obligation of the international community to take urgent national and international measures to eradicate such phenomena. The Commission called on States to complement legislative, administrative and penal measures with economic, social, educational and information measures in their national programmes.

On the situation of human rights in Myanmar, the Special Rapporteur, Yozo Yokota, told the Commission that detentions without minimum guarantees for persons under custody, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, disappearances and arbitrary executions had allegedly been carried out by the authorities. He said he was prevented from seeing any of the political leaders still under detention, particularly the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Mrs. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Felix Ermacora, the Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, said the conflict had persisted in that country even after the dramatic change in Government in the spring of 1992. The Afghan people who had suffered so much had seen their country being devastated. The complete destruction of the country's economic infrastructure provided a telling picture of the situation, he said.

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